

Subpoena for LBJ Tape Hurts News, Says CBS

CHICAGO (AP) — A Columbia Broadcasting System official said Friday a subpoena for parts of an interview with former President Lyndon B. Johnson that were not telecast could mark the end of autobiographical broadcasts by public figures.

"A vital dimension of journalism will be lost to the American public," Burton Benjamin, senior executive producer of CBS News, predicted.

A U.S. District Court judge issued a subpoena for tapes of an interview with Johnson regarding the assassination of President John F. Kennedy. CBS has asked that the subpoena be suppressed.

The subpoena was obtained by Sherman H. Skelnick, a legal researcher, in connection with his suit against the National Archives and Records Service which, he alleges, is holding back information on the Kennedy assassination.

The telecast interview with Johnson was edited to one hour of air time from six hours and 22 minutes of actual conversation taped. CBS said certain material was deleted from the tapes at

Johnson's request "because of national security."

Skelnick maintained the deleted material is relevant to his lawsuit.

Newton N. Minew, former Federal Communications Commission chairman and now attorney for CBS, opposed the subpoena, saying it violates freedom of speech and press.

The subpoena was issued by Judge Hubert L. Will. Friday's motion was heard by Judge Julius J. Hoffman who continued the issue to May 14 because, he said, he believes Judge Will should hear the arguments.